The Toss of A Copper.

Story of My Experience With Two Lovers.

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS, JR.

LETTER NO. 3.—(Continued.)

There was a tinge of respect in that "my" of his by which I was strangely gratified. Well, as soon as they were comfortably fixed, there followed strolls in the park, reminiscences of our childhood days, tales of fighting, encomiums upon the land of the sun, of the desert, of the oasis, horses fleet as the wind and supple as the waves, days robed in blinding sunlight, nights clad in blue—an immediate friendship, complete and

THERE FOLLOWED STROLLS IN THE PARK.

trustful. Not a shadow of any mental trickery, neither on his part nor on mine. We were cousins, we were brother and sister. Of his father, left behind and watching over his extensive vineyards, Rene spoke with the tenderness of a child, and little by little I came upon the gentleness and sweetness of a young girl hidden away in the character of this Bedouin. Shall I tell you exactly what I discovered? It is this: In all the glimpse of his life, which up to the present has been that of a true soldier devoted to his profession, I don't see any place for a woman. He has never been in love, that's certain. I see it, I feel it. For ten years—he's thirty now—it's been his custom to keep a journal. I asked him to let me see it. He promised to do so without the slightest hesitation. Think of it, dear Blanche, a man of thirty, an officer being able to hand the daily record of his life to a young girl to read! He only had his diary of the current year with him.

"It's fortunate," said he, "for you'd be bored to death if you attempted to read many of these books. Filled as they are with a constant recurrence of the same subject, you'd find them insufferably monotonous."

I was anxious to look the book through at once. Would there be a mention of me? Why this curiosity on my part? He sets down everything, so there must be something about his coming to see us. How would he express himself?

Under date of June 13 I found this:

"Yesterday mother received a letter from Madame de Marias. Her daughter must be a very pretty girl if she has fulfilled the promise she gave ten years ago."

Farther along, under the date of his arrival, June 27, I found this:

"Adrienne is a very pretty girl, and very intellectual, too, and very kind."

That's all I found, Blanche. I wish there had been more. I had told Casimir of my cousin's expected arrival. I had talked about him as if he were a big boy, not very bright, in fact, a mere nobody. You would have laughed if you could have seen his look of astonishment, of disappointment, when the two men came face to face. I hadn't told him of the transformation which had surprised me. Why didn't I tell him? I can't say; possibly I didn't want him to know that I had seen any change. I didn't want to seem to have taken any particular notice of Rene.

"The profession of arms has benefited your cousin very much," remarked Casimir. "He has become a very handsome fellow, and bears very little resemblance to your description."

"He has been very ill," I stammered.

"That makes him the more interesting," he made answer slowly, and as he uttered these words Casimir looked steadily into my eyes. His filled with sadness. I had almost said tears. I yearned to throw my arms around his neck, so thankful was I to him for this involuntary display of jealousy. I wanted to say to him:

"Are you out of your wits? Can you suppose that Rene seemed to me any more than a playmate of my childhood, a relative seen after long absence?"

But I held my peace. Something told me that that was the best. I even appeared a little nettled by his remark, but in manner only. After all, I was not engaged to Casimir; he had no right to make such a remark. The more so or the less so, as Rene himself, after the presentation, had shown the keenest discernment and the greatest delicacy.

"Cousin," he had said to me, "there's no need of seeing you and M. de Villelong together for any length of time without being able to predict a marriage. I must say he impresses me as a most thorough gentleman."

"You are in error!"

"He is not a thorough gentleman?"

"Oh, yes; but there is no question of any marriage."

Why did I tell this falsehood? What impulse led me to utter it? I was under no obligation to make Rene my confidant, but I felt that the moment he guessed the truth I would be in honor bound not to deny it to Casimir. I was ashamed of myself. I turned abruptly away from Rene. I hurried to my room. I burst into tears. I can write no more now. God help me! Would that you were here, Blanche!

LETTER NO. 4.

SAME TO SAME.

When I left my room the next morning, dear Blanche, I had made up my mind to one thing—it was to say to mamma that she might authorize Casimir to ask for my hand. It was the only thing I could do to make atonement to my own conscience for the cowardly act—yes, there's no other word for it—which I had committed. It was necessary for me to punish myself at once. Why punish myself? Would my becoming Casimir's wife be a punishment? What juggling with words was this? I was deeply agitated, dissatisfied with Casimir, with Rene, with myself above all, for the two others were quite innocent. Casimir loved me and was jealous. He was afraid he was going to lose me. He let me see it; it was very natural he should. Rene had guessed our love, divined our intentions. He had told me so frankly. He praised the man that I was in love with. Why shouldn't he, since he wasn't in love with me himself? Why should he love me? He had other things to do. He was to return to Africa to fight, to stop some bit of murderous lead, while Casimir and I were amusing ourselves at the opera.

I must confess some men really do deserve credit. Look at this young man of thirty, a handsome, intelligent fellow, fighting out there in No Man's Land, just escaping death in a hospital ward, and perfectly satisfied to come and spend his sick leave with his mother like a simple college boy at our country home! No woman is in his life. No, not one! He receives no letters, he writes none. He will soon join his regiment to begin anew a life of fatigue, obedience, toil, devotion, renunciation, to end in getting shot in some out-of-the-way corner, and dying like an animal, without careful attention, without tender nursing. Isn't it admirable?

I could not bring myself to ask mamma to authorize Casimir to propose. But I did the next best thing. As he only came out to the country twice a week, I found out a way to have him there all the time. I told Rene freely and frankly everything in regard to my intention of marrying Casimir, and by so doing I made it possible for me to talk about him at any and all times, just as if he were present. I knew I could trust Rene, that he wouldn't mention it either to mamma or to his mother. Wasn't I right in doing so? Suppose my marriage shouldn't take place—an absurd supposition, but everything is possible—Rene's lips would be sealed forever.

In thus making a confidant of my cousin I would have the satisfaction of seeing how he took it—what effect it had upon him—for while out walking the day before with his mother, who was absolutely ignorant of my intent, she had let drop certain words, from which I concluded that she was feeling how the land lay, as the expression is. I feigned not to understand. Could she have had, thought I, some scheme in view in thus visiting us with her son?

To tell Rene everything would be to end his hopes then and there. Would it not be more loyal? But all this time there was nothing forbidding me to keep an eye on him, to observe how he acted. If I was ever in his thoughts he must have had splendid control over himself. He didn't draw a muscle. He thanked me for my confidence in him, and asked me to preserve it always and under all circumstances. Under all circumstances? Did he foresee something which I did not? Did he have a different opinion from me in regard to Casimir? I made up my mind to observe him very closely when they were together, to see if he manifested any spite, any coolness.

He grasped his hand with genuine cordiality, and from the moment he learned of my affection for Casimir he appeared to take the greatest interest in him. It's quite likely that he has never given me a thought and that he is not in his mother's scheme at all; that he looks upon me as his little cousin, as a little girl, in fact.

Meanwhile I'm delighted with the effect of my frankness. Casimir has completely gotten over his alarm and is perfectly at ease with Rene. They've become the best of friends, and take

TAKE REAL PLEASURE IN BEING TOGETHER.

real pleasure in being together. And so we three pass our time walking, talking and riding. Rene is a fine artist, and Casimir is a good musician. Now that Rene is with us there was no reason why Casimir should keep up his fixed and official visits, and so mamma invited him to come and spend a fortnight with us. "And, in the meantime," said she, "I shall, as occasion offers, let our friends know the truth of the matter."

But, dear Blanche, I have asked for a delay. My soul is so deeply and mysteriously enraptured as I am, that is, when I don't get terror-stricken at my position. I protest to you that Rene has not made Casimir lose in my eyes, but still Casimir's rights have not blinded me as to Rene's qualities. When one of them is away I lack something. How shall I express myself? They are complementary to one another. One is light, the other is dark; one is a Parisian full of wit, the other is an Oriental full of melancholy; both are handsome, brave, intelligent, refined. Need I assure you, Blanche, that if I had been Casimir's wife before Rene arrived I should not have glanced at my cousin, for I'm quite sure of my own honesty; or had I been Rene's wife I shouldn't have noted Casimir. To sum up, dearest, incredible as it may seem, I'm as happy with one as with the other, but when they are both with me my happiness is much greater. Yes, it is perfect.

When I am alone at night I interrogate myself. I prove myself; I attempt to compare these two beings. I see them in no uncertain light, but just as they are, completely different, but equally full of tenderness and sympathy. I resolved last night to fall asleep while all my thoughts were with Casimir, and I succeeded, but I dreamt of Rene all night long. In a word, dear Blanche, give ear but keep my secret: I love two men, and say it I must, I love one as well as the other. It's monstrous! At times I wish that some deadly ailment might come upon me to get me out of this tangle. Have pity on me, dearest, and tell me what to do. You know.

LETTER NO. 5.

BLANCHE TO ADRIENNE. (Return mail.)

Since you love one as well as you do the other, toss up a copper! Marry the one chance selects for you. You will probably regret the other up to the morning of your marriage. You won't think of him after that. Kisses and consolation from your old school friend,

BLANCHE.

LETTER NO. 6.

ADRIENNE TO BLANCHE.

Now I know what I've always suspected, that you never loved M. de Gressan. I'm as sure of it now as if your heart were open before me and I could look into its very depths. It all dawns upon me now—the expression of your cold, steel-gray eyes when he showered pet names upon you or covered your hands with kisses, that terrible look of indifference when he encircled you with his arm, that calmness at his coming and his going, that marble composure the day the news came that he had been challenged and must fight. All, all, it all breaks upon me with the hard, harsh glare of reality after some delicious dream is ended. No, you never loved M. de Gressan, you have never loved any man, or you would not have written me such words. No one can jest at love who has ever felt its terrible dignity, its awfulness, its dread solemnity.

I can well imagine a person smiling at the news of the loss of a fortune, I can even conceive of a dying person being so frivolous as to push the holy sacrament aside with ribald epithet, but I cannot imagine a woman who has ever truly loved a man as jesting over the pang of a sister. No, Blanche, like the eyeless fish of the black waters of some subterranean lake, the glory of the sunshine is lost upon you! I love you still, dear Blanche. I always shall love you, but you're not the woman I stand in need of just at present. Many thanks for the suggestion, but I never carry copper coin in my portemonnaie.

LETTER NO. 7.

SAME TO SAME.

Well, dear Blanche, it's all settled, and settled, I believe, by a gracious and all-wise Providence; which takes far more interest in the affairs of this world than such scoffers as you are would fain admit. Now that it is all history, I'll play the historian and give you a plain recital without word or comment. You no doubt remember my telling you of the genuine friendship which sprang up between Casimir and Rene. The more they saw of each other the more they liked each other, and would you believe it, I was often obliged to send a servant the second time to call them when I was waiting for their escort, so fond did they become of each other's society. One morning, to my great surprise, Casimir didn't make his appearance, although the post brought both of us letters. When I say both of us I mean that there was a letter for Rene, too, as he and Casimir were to go hunting that afternoon.

The day was chilly, and there was a fire burning on the hearth. Rene was standing leaning on the mantel when the servant handed him Casimir's letter. I took no note of him I was so eagerly deciphering my letter from Casimir, who, by the way, writes awful scrawls. The letter was very tender. A sudden business engagement had interfered to prevent his coming. It was full of those sweet nothings which a woman so loves to get from the man who is dear to her. I wanted to press it to my lips, but I was ashamed—no, unwilling to hurt Rene's feelings so needlessly. But suddenly, as I glanced at him, I was startled by the change that had taken place in his face. It was as if his old ailment had come back upon him, and I thought it had. He was deathly pale, and his hands trembled as he tore up Casimir's letter and threw it into the fire.

"Rene!" I exclaimed, springing toward him, "you're ill. Let me call one of the servants."

"No, no, cousin," he stammered; "it's absolutely nothing. I'll be better in a moment. Come to think, I'll go and take some of my medicine and join you later."

The moment the door closed behind him a strange chill came over me. I stepped toward the fire. There lay Casimir's note, only half burned. An irresistible impulse prompted me to stoop and pick it up. What remained uncharred read as follows:

"Old Chappie: You and—cruel indeed—intended to—sweetheart, but can't refuse you—keep seat—beside the divine Goija."

As I read the words the cold perspiration started out on my brow, my limbs bent under me; I came near falling.

"Great heavens," I whispered, "can it be possible that Casimir is decoying Rene to Paris? Oh, no, that would be too terrible; it must be that in his haste he has put the wrong letter in the envelope addressed to Rene."

Rene now made his appearance quite himself again. I thrust the remnants of the letter into my pocket and we went out for a ride. Once in the open air his gayety and good humor came back to him. Once or twice I turned the conversation to Casimir's failure to keep his engagement.

"Oh, cousin," said he, "it's of no importance; we shall have him to-morrow."

After dinner we all strolled out on the terrace, but after half an hour or so mamma and aunt complained of the dew and went in. Rene and I were left alone. The night was wonderously beautiful. We talked of many things. In stooping to pick up my fan his face came so close to mine that I felt the warmth of his breath on my cheek. Our hands touched. It seemed as if the world was slipping away beneath me; that terrible letter burned upon my inward sight in letters of fire. I clung to Rene's hand as if I were drowning and it were held out to me.

"Rene," I whispered, "Rene, you rejoin your regiment next week; we may never see each other again. Have you nothing to say to me?"

"Yes, yes, cousin," he replied, speaking with great difficulty. "Casimir will make you very happy. God bless you both!" And springing up, he seized me by the hand and dragged me toward the house.

The next morning mamma came to my room before I was dressed. She was greatly agitated.

"My darling," she fairly gasped, "I have sent a messenger to M. de Villelong requesting him to discontinue his visits."

"Discontinue his visits?" I exclaimed in mock surprise.

"Yes, my child," she continued, "I have positive evidence that he attended a dinner given at the Cafe Anglais last night to that infamous Gioja."

LETTER NO. 8.

CASIMIR TO RENE. (Three months later.)

DEAR RENE: It was the best thing for me to do. I felt that Adrienne loved you better than me, and I knew that you were more worthy of her. God bless you, dear boy. I shall get well of the hurt when I hear how happy you both are.

[THE END.]

RATS AND MICE.

Russia Suffered From a Genuine Plague of Rodents.

Russia has suffered from a genuine plague of rats and mice, and the story is attractively told by United States Consul Heenan at Odessa, in a report to the State Department. The vermin first appeared in Southern Russia in the autumn of 1893, and they increased in number with marvelous rapidity, owing to heavy grain harvests leaving much unthrashed grain, and to the mild weather. In addition to the common house and field mouse, another and new variety appeared, having a long, sharp nose. These mice overran every place, and they moved in vast numbers like armies, and in instances did not hesitate to attack men and animals. While the rats were not so numerous as the mice, they were more destructive, eating everything, gnawing away the woodwork, and even ruining entire buildings. After exhausting all other means, the plague was finally terminated in 1894 by resort to bacteriology, when the vermin were destroyed by the inoculation of a few rodents with contagious disease germs.

Michigan Land Ten Cents an Acre.

Under the recent land tax law of Michigan all lands held by the State for three years for non-payment of taxes are now subject to homestead entry. A homesteader can take up 240 acres by paying ten cents an acre for five years.

Horses Cheap in the East.

Horses are cheap in the East just now, as well as in the West. A fairly good horse was sold at auction at Bethel, Vt., a few days ago for $2. A perfectly sound three-year-old colt, of good size, was sold in the same place for $12.50.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SECOND.

Pale is the February sky,
And brief the day-time's sunny hours;
The wind-swept forest seems to sigh
For the sweet months of birds and flowers.

Yet hath no month a prouder day,
Not even when the summer broods
O'er meadows in their fresh array
Or autumn tints the glowing woods.

For this chill season now again
Brings, in its annual round, the morn,
When, greatest of the sons of men,
The immortal Washington was born.

WASHINGTONANA.

Episodes in the Life of the Father of His Country.

ALMOST A BRITISH JACK TAR.

The Washington family held the theories of primogeniture, which the Virginian gentry had brought from old England, and George as a younger son had his own way to make in the world.

At fourteen George was shy and awkward, but big and strong. People began life early in those days, and the Widow Washington suggested to Laurence, her stepson and the head of the house, to see if his father-in-law, Colonel Fairfax, couldn't suggest something for George.

Fairfax and Laurence Washington agreed that the British Navy was the place for a strong lad with the military instinct, and to the British Navy he might have gone, and become the enemy rather than the deliverer of his country.

Just about this time Tom Fairfax, Colonel Fairfax's son, fell on H. M. S. Harwich, during a fight with a French squadron commanded by M. de Bourdonaye on the coast of India. This was 1745, the year of the "rising" in Scotland.

Tom Fairfax was only twenty-one, and the pet of the Washington and Fairfax families. Mrs. Washington then began to think that the navy was not quite the place for her George. Her brother, Joseph Ball, also wrote to dissuade her, saying that the boy would better be apprenticed to a trade than sent before the mast, where he might be "pressed" from one ship to another, "cut and beaten like a negro," and where promotion could only be obtained by influence.

It was at this juncture that the sixth Lord Fairfax, whether crossed in love or for whatever reason, came to live in Virginia, and, as a distant relative of the family, took an interest in George and solved the question of his future by making the boy his surveyor, friend and companion.

The pleasure shown by the old courtier in the young lad's society bids one think that George must have had an old head on young shoulders.

AS A COLONEL.

In 1760 Captain George Mercer wrote to a friend a description of the personal appearance of "Colonel George Washington, late Commander of the Virginia Provincial troops," which ran as follows: "He may be described as being straight as an Indian, measuring six feet two inches in his stockings, and weighing 175 pounds. His frame is padded with well developed muscles, indicating great strength. His bones and joints are large, as are his feet and hands. He is wide shouldered, but has not a deep or round chest; is neat waisted, but is broad across the hips, and has rather long legs and arms. His head is well shaped, though not large, but is gracefully poised on a superb neck. A large and straight, rather than a prominent nose, blue-gray penetrating eyes, which are widely separated, and overhung by a heavy brow. His face is long rather than broad, with high, round cheek bones, and terminates in a good firm chin. He has a clear though rather a colorless pale skin, which burns with the sun. A pleasing, benevolent though a commanding countenance, dark brown hair, which he wears in a queue. His mouth is large and generally firmly closed, but which from time to time discloses some defective teeth. His features are regular and placed with all the muscles of his face under perfect control, though flexible, and expressive of deep feeling when moved by emotions. In conversation he looks you full in the face, is deliberate, deferential and engaging. His voice is agreeable rather than strong. His demeanor at all times composed and dignified. His movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic, and he is a splendid horseman."

HIS LOVE AFFAIRS.

It was fated that Washington, like Napoleon, was to be the victim of more than one disappointment in love. Every one knows how attentive he was to Mary Phillipse, of the good, old Westchester family whose house is now the City Hall of Yonkers, during a stay in New York, but there was a Virginian love affair considerably earlier.

His first love was the charming Sally Cary, one of that aristocratic Virginia family of Carys, of which Mrs. Burton Harrison (Constance Cary) is in our day a member. To her he wrote love poems, anonymous, printed in the Virginia Gazette, and other love poems, not anonymous, sent to her in manuscript. These rhymes described his "poor, restless heart, pierc'd by Cupid's dart," and made use of the other rhymes of "dove," "love," and "above," not unfamiliar in every age. With her, too, he danced at the festivals of St. Tammany, the titular saint of the Colonies.

But Miss Cary would not listen to the suit of the long-legged frontiersman, and married instead his dearest friend and woods companion, George William Fairfax, and went to live at Belvoir, the Fairfax seat. When pretty Sally Fairfax died in England, years afterward, her Virginian heirs found some of Washington's love letters, and these have been kept unpublished ever since.

Until the war, however, Mrs. Sally and her husband continued to live in the Colonies. Five years after Washington's courtship of her, when he had become famous in frontier warfare, he met at Mr. Chamberlayne's house on the Pamunkey River, the Widow Custis, whom he afterward married.

Of course, the Belvoir ladies saw a great deal of the mistress of Mount Vernon, and Virginia gossip, which takes the harmless form of tradition, has it that Mistress Martha Washington never forgave Mistress Sally Fairfax for having been her husband's first sweetheart. She was intensely human, was Mistress Martha.

HIS STEPCHILDREN.

Like Napoleon, Washington had two stepchildren, a boy and a girl, and, as in Napoleon's case, the love between him and them was as close and warm as if he had been their father in the flesh.

As Eugene de Beauharnais became Napoleon's aid, young John Parke Custis served Washington in a like capacity. At the siege of Yorktown young Custis contracted camp fever, and died of it, at the age of twenty-seven. Young as he was, he left a widow, Eleanor Calvert, a descendant of Lord Baltimore; a son, George Washington Parke Custis, a baby daughter, Nellie, who, with the boy, was adopted by Washington, and two elder daughters, Eliza and Martha, who became the wives of Thomas Law and Thomas Peter. Four children by a father of twenty-seven was not an extraordinary record in those days.

Washington's other stepchild died even younger than the young Custis, whose death at Yorktown saddened the hour of victory. She was named Martha for her mother, and died young, in 1773.

It thus happened that, after the war's close left some opportunity for domestic life, Washington had about him no young people except his adopted grandchildren, G. W. P. and Nelly Custis. And the girl was easily his favorite.

Nelly Custis was a girl of singular grace and beauty, and would not have needed the high position of her family to support her position as a belle in Virginia. Her face was mobile and expressive rather than regular, and, alone among the ladies of her day, her portraits show her as a girl like those of to-day. She was thoroughly modern in appearance. She married Lawrence Lewis, Washington's favorite nephew.

It may be noted, as a rather odd fact, that Martha Custis, Mrs. Washington's granddaughter, named her three daughters Columbia, America and Britannia Wellington.

HIS CURIOUS FALSE TEETH.

The peculiarly square and clumsy look of Washington's jaw in the Stuart portrait and other late pictures of him makes him look very unlike the slight-faced and rather handsome man shown in his earlier portraits.

This curious appearance was due to his false teeth.

The science of dentistry is only a hundred years old, and at the first false teeth were not only very expensive but extremely imperfect. The first dentist who ever practiced in America was Le Mair, a visitor with the French army in the Revolution, though before that time jewelers had made a few sets of false teeth, and, of course, physicians had extracted molars whose usefulness was outlived.

Washington's teeth were made by John Greenwood, of New York, the first American dentist, who carved a complete set of teeth out of sea-horse ivory in 1790. The work of making the teeth occupied a long time, and they were fastened into the mouth, not by the familiar principle of suction, but by a complicated and ingenious arrangement of springs and bands of steel, which partly filled the mouth and made the lips bulge out, particularly the lower one.

The processes of dentistry improving somewhat, Greenwood made another set of teeth for Washington in 1795, and the portraits of him painted after that year show rather less of the grim appearance about the lips which characterizes the most familiar portrait of the first President, though in some of his portraits he is represented as he looked—with no teeth at all in his mouth.

A WEALTHY MAN.

It is sometimes said that Washington was in his day the richest American. It would be difficult to prove this, and doubtless the statement is an exaggeration, such as the common country tale that Washington could "stand and jump twenty-two feet." It is needless to say that no such record of his prowess in this line has come down to us.

It used also to be said that Washington had once thrown a dollar across the Potomac. Mr. Evarts's witty comment that "a dollar would go further in those days, you know," is well remembered.

Washington was not, however, the man to throw away a dollar. He was precise, careful and methodical. In youth he was, and expected to remain, compartively poor as he was a younger son, and the family followed the English cutoms of primogeniture—so far, at least, as concerned the family estate, Mount Vernon, which was left to Laurence Washington. Lawrence died in 1752, and his infant daughter shortly afterward, leaving the estate to George.

His marriage with the wealthy widow of John Parke Custis brought him more wealth, and his investments in Western lands were also shrewd and profitable.

But, though an exact and capable business man, Washington was no niggard. He entertained lavishly. It was by his advice that the largest room in the White House was designed for a state dining-room. Washington never occupied the house, and his successors have found the room much too large, even for state dinners. The dining-room in Mount Vernon, designed by Washington, is also much the largest in the house.

It is generally known that Washington received no pay for his services in the Revolution. Congress voted him $500 a month, but he never accepted it, charging only his actual expenses.

GEORGE WASHINGTON—FIVE HISTORICAL PORTRAITS.

Central picture, portrait by Gilbert Stuart. 1. Original study by Peale. 2. Mount Vernon portrait by Peale. 3. Portrait by Trumbull. 4. Portrait by Joseph Wright.

WASHINGTON'S CABIN HOME.

His Humble Abode While Surveying the Wilderness for Lord Fairfax.

Sunshine and storm have been at work upon it for generations, and yet there are few buildings that attract the admirers of Washington that have more of interest in them than the decaying cabin, which stands alone in an old pasture field a half mile from Berryville, in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

The old cabin was the home of Washington when he was a surveyor. He came here direct from the maternal roof to begin the arduous and, at that time, dangerous work of surveying the lands of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, who owned all the northern part of Virginia under the King's patent; the work was arduous because of the physical aspect of the country, then a dense wilderness, and dangerous because of the character of the inhabitants, who were principally Indians or

A HERO'S HUMBLE HOME.

scarcely less wild trappers or squatters upon his Lordship's domain. Washington had been selected by the old nobleman because of his belief in the youth's ability to cope with these elements, and the young surveyor left his home on the banks of the Potomac early in 1748, just after the completion of his sixteenth year, his only companion being George William Fairfax, nephew of old Lord Thomas. Whether these boys erected the building or found it already in place history does not state, but well-authenticated tradition says that they built it themselves. That they used it for an office, kept their instruments there and slept in the upper room, there is ample proof. Here, during all the summer of 1748, when not actively engaged in the field, they were busy with their office work or in defining bounds for the settlers.

The old hut has, in the memory of the present generation, done duty as a "milk house" for farmers. Of the dense copse of trees which Howe says shaded the spring, only a tall and sturdy elm remains. On a hill not far away is "Soldier's Rest," another log cabin—itself of historic interest also, for in it lived Daniel Morgan, the rough teamster who afterward became Washington's right hand in the War for Independence—Morgan, the hero of Quebec and Saratoga, and the man who destroyed Tarleton at the Cowpens and checked the tide of British victories. Morgan was a conspicuous figure in all the rough-and-tumble fights that gave the little town of Berryville the name of Battletown, by which it was known for 100 years, and after these encounters he would go and sit on the rocks down by the old Washington cabin while his wife would bathe his bruised and cut head in the cooling waters of the spring, and bind up his bloody wounds.

It seems almost a pity that this old cabin should be allowed to crumble away in the Virginia pasture field where it has stood for 145 years. The great elm tree looks as if it was good for a thousand years yet, while the rock and the spring will be there for evermore, but sun and wind and rain have made sad ravages in the hut that sheltered the youthful Washington. The present owner of the cabin is G. G. Calmes, of Berryville.—New York Tribune.

More Ground for Eulogy.

All hail to great George Washington,
Let's follow in his track.
He never was nor couldn't be
An Anglo-maniac.

—Washington Star.

SING SING SECRETS.

MYSTERIOUS CODES BY WHICH CONVICTS COMMUNICATE.

Prison Officials Unable to Detect How Criminals Baffle the Silent System—The Fake Fight—"Underground" Telegraphy.

In the great gray stone structure called Sing Sing there are always from 1500 to 2000 convicts, men who have committed every known crime. These are the pick of the criminal population of New York State. One-half of them are the product of New York City. There are novices among them, but the atmosphere there is so heavily charged with the knowledge of experienced crime, that before they leave the novices know nearly all the tricks of the craft.

Silence is supposed to reign supreme in Sing Sing. A convict is forbidden to converse with another. If his lips move he is at once pounced upon by the watchful guard and placed in solitary confinement.

Yet they do talk, and talk often, too. But how they do it is a mystery which the officials of every large prison the world over would like to solve. In Paris and in London, where the discipline, perhaps, is even stricter than in Sing Sing, the convicts have a system of exchanging information. Keepers who have been among convicts many years have endeavored to discover the trick, but without result.

Principal Keeper Connaughton has been employed in Sing Sing for thirty years. He went there a young man, and now his hair is snow white. He has won the friendship, such as it is, of innumerable convicts, but great as his experience and knowledge are, he has never been able to fathom their system of communication.

Not only do the convicts manage to exchange news, but they do other things. For instance, a man who had been confined for twenty years, left the prison on his release whistling one of the latest comic opera airs. How he managed to pick up the tune and retain the notes in his memory would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer.

If there were a Presidential election to-day every convict in Sing Sing would know who was elected the first thing to-morrow morning, and just how the different States stood. Every important news event which happens the world over they know about, yet to read a newspaper or be caught with one is a serious offense. When a noted prisoner arrives, like a murderer doomed to the death chair, every convict knows all about it before the clerk has finished taking his pedigree. Yet the convicts are separated in a dozen large buildings. News travels incredibly fast there and so silently that the vigilance of the keepers counts for naught. It seems to soak in through the stone walls and make its presence felt only to the unfortunates.

It is not due to lack of vigilance that the men are able to communicate with each other. The silent system is enforced as carefully as it is possible to enforce it in an institution where the prisoners are not kept in solitary confinement. When the men are in the workshops or in the yards they are almost constantly under the eyes of the guards. They march to and from their work in the lock step, each squad looking like a dirty gray caterpillar as it swings across the yard and each man in that squad facing the same way. There is not an instant when the men are unwatched, and it is difficult to explain how they communicate. Of course some of the tricks have been discovered, but these are only resorted to when particular convicts wish to converse.

The fake fight is a common trick. Two convicts without a word of warning will spring at each other like enraged tigers and clutching one another around the neck will role over the ground in a perfect frenzy of rage. Blows and kicks will be dealt with terrific force, but all the time valuable words will be exchanged. Genuine fights of this kind are common occurrence, and so faithfully are the fake fights carried out that it is difficult to distinguish the false from the real. Criminals who were bitter enemies in the outside world often meet for the first time within the confines of Sing Sing, and when they come together a fierce, if short, fight is bound to come off. That accounts for the number of genuine fights.

Criminal lawyers, who, perhaps, know as much about convicts as, if not more than, the prison officials themselves, say that they do have a number of well recognized codes of communication. One of the best known methods of this kind consists of a series of raps corresponding to the Morse telegraphic code. If a prisoner understands telegraphy, he may transmit messages to another prisoner who is also a telegrapher by rapping out the Morse code in his cell, or in workshop or messroom, without very much fear of detection.

In some of the carelessly constructed prisons it has been discovered that the convicts have used the water pipe to construct a series of speaking tubes, and in several cases they have successfully planned escapes in this way.

The system by which prisoners communicate with friends on the outside is also a mystery which prison officials would be glad to fathom. In prison parlance, it is known as the "underground." The convicts are allowed to write home once a month, but each letter is first read by the prison chaplain. If there is anything improper in it, the letter is withheld. But the improper letters never go out by way of the chaplain. The "underground" system takes care of them.

Criminals in Sing Sing have been known to conduct a series of successful crimes by communicating with accomplices on the outside. Bribing the underkeepers would be one way, but the system is too general to be worked in that fashion. Escapes are always planned and carried out through the underground method.—New Orleans Picayune.

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